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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /059 W
----------100206 081020Z /10
R 080900Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2361
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 9164

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID
SUBJECT: THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE RISES IN JAKARTA

REF: (A) JAKARTA 8359, (B) JAKARTA 7559

1. SUMMARY. SUSTAINED APPLAUSE FOR OUTOING JAKARTA GOVERNOR ALI SADIKIN, WHO HAS BECOME OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF THE NATION'S LEADERSHIP, IS CLEARLY SERVING AS AN OUTLET FOR THE CAPITAL CITY ELITE TO EXPRESS THEIR DISAFFECTION WITH THE SUHARTO REGIME. THIS DEVELOPMENT COMBINED WITH THE TRUCULENCE OF MOSLEM FORCES HAS APPARENTLY CAUSED THE GOVERNMENT SOME CONCERN. UNDOUBTEDLY SPEAKING FOR THE ARMY LEADERSHIP, JAVA COMMANDER WIDODO PUBLICLY WARNED STUDENTS AND MOSLEMS AGAINST CRATING AN "OPPOSITION CULTURE." HIS STATEMENT SEEMS TO HAVE HELPED PERSUADE MOSLEM LEADERS TO MODERATE THEIR STANCE BUT HAS HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON THE STUDENTS AND HAS STIMULATED A LIVELY AND CRITICAL DEBATE IN THE PRESS. AS OF THIS MOMENT THE SITUATION DOES NOT APPEAR EXPLOSIVE SINCE
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THE STUDENTS ARE BADLY FRAGMENTED, THE MSOLEMS SOMEWHAT COWED AND SECURITY FORCES MARKEDLY RESTRAINED. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE, HOWEVER, THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS GONE TOO FAR AND MOVE AGAINST ALI SADIKIN, ON WHOM THE MILITARY ARE REORTEDLY COLLECTING INCRIMINATING INFORMA-TION, A SELF-REINFORCING SPIRAL OF DISSENT AND REPRESSION COULD RESULT. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE OF JAKARTA IS UP A BIT, MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THE DRAWN-OUT AND SOMETIME EMOTIONAL LEAVE-TAKING OF OUTGOING GOVERNOR ALI SADIKIN. SADIKIN, DETERMINED TO GO OUT WITH A BANG RATHER THAN A WHIMPER, HAS ENLIVENED A MARATHON SERIES OF FAREWELL APPEARANCES WITH SOME PARTING SHOTS AT GOVERNMENT POWERS-THAT-BE, STIRRING UP THE ALREADY BUBBLING RPO-SADIKIN SENTIMENT IN DIVERSE SEGMENTS OF JAKARTA'S POLITICALLY AWARE COMMUNITY.

3. SADIKIN'S MOST TELLING BLOW WAS A MOCKING COMMENTARY ON THE LAUNCHING OF A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST "ILLEGAL LEVIES" BY LOWER OFFICIALDOM. SADIKIN POINTEDLY OBSERVED THAT REFORM, TO HAVE ANY REAL IMPACT, MUST BE CONDUCTED "FROM THE TOP" RATHER THAN THE BOTTOM. THE OUTGOING GOVERNOR HAS ALSO RESURRECTED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PENURY IN PROVIDING FOR JAKARTA'S NEEDS, AGAIN ATTACKED THE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION POLICIES OF SUHARTO GOVERNMENT, AND AMIABLY HOSTED A SERIES OF DELEGATIONS URGING HIM TO REMAIN IN PUBLIC LIFE AND SEEK OTHER OFFICES.

4. STUDENT AND YOUTH GROUPS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, HAVE BEEN THE MOST VIGOROUS IN VOICING THEIR SUPPORT FOR SADIKIN, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THEIR ADMIRATION FOR THE GOVERNOR'S TYLE OF LEADERSHIP, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THE "BROTHER ALI"
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CAUSE PROVIDES A HANDY VEHICLE FOR EXPRESSING GENERAL STUDENT DISSATISFACTION WITH THE SUHARTO REGIME. A NUMBER OF SMALL, APPARENTLY UNRELATED AD HOC GROUPS HAVE PUBLICLY "NOMINATED" SADIKIN FOR PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT, THE MOST PROMINENT ONE LED BY FORMER UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA STUDENT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DIPO ALAM, A PERENNIAL POLITICAL LIGHTNING ROD IN JAKARTA. DIPO ALSO CREATED THE CURRENT "IN" ITEM ON JAKARTA'S CAMPUSES, A T SHIRT EMBLAZONED WITH SADIKIN'S PICTURE AND CAPTIONED, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND INDONESIAN, "BROTHER ALI IS THE BEST* WHY NOT THE BEST*"

5. OTHER POLITICALLY ORIENTED GROUPS, WHILE LESS OUT-SPOKEN, HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE GOVERNOR'S DEPARTURE. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE JAKARTA REGIONAL PARLIAMENT FROM THE UNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTY (PPP), FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE PUBLICLY REGRETTED THAT SADIKIN'S MOST RECENT EXTENSION OF TOUR, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO LAST UNTIL SEPTEMBER, WAS ABRUPTLY CUT SHORT, A SENTIMENT ECHOED PRIVATELY TO US BY A PPP NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN. SEVERAL OF JAKARTA'S NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN THE GOVERNOR HIGHLY SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT, NOTABLY THE RESPECTED

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DAILY KOMPAS. (THE GOI-RUN TELEVISION NETWORK, BY CONTRAST, VIRTUALLY IGNORED SADIKIN'S ACTIVITIES UNTIL THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, WHEN THE ABSENCE OF TV COVERAGE ITSELF BECAME A MINOR ISSUE IN THE PRESS.)

6. THE PRO-ALI SADIKIN CAMPAIGN ADDED TO THE PPP'S CONTINUED AGAITATION OVER ELECTION IRREGULARITIES (REF. B) IS CLEARLY CAUSING THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUS CONCERN. COMMANDER OF MILITARY REGION II LIEUTENANT GENERAL WIDODO, IN A RECENT SPEECH WIDELY INTERPRETED AS AN ARMY-INITIATED WARNING TO POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS (AND DESCRIBED AS SUCH BY A WIDODO AIDE), DECRIED THE RISE OF A "CULTURE OF OPPOSITION" IN INDONESIA, AIMED AT UNDERMINING PANCASILA AND REESTABLISHING THE DISCREDITED SYSTEM OF "LIBERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DEMOCRACY." WIDODO NOTED THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS, UNNAMED, WERE ATTEMPTING TO MOLD A BROAD COALESCENSE OF OPPOSITIONIST FORCES INTO A VEHICLE FOR CHALLENGING THE TENURE OF THE NEW ORDER.

7. WIDODO'S WARNING SEEMS TO HAVE "TAKEN" WITHE PPP LEADERSHIP, WHICH WAS ALREADY SHOWING SIGNS OF PULLING IN ITS OPPOSITIONIST HORNS BEFORE THE GENERAL SPOKE. A PROMINENT PPP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, WHO IN EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD HAWKISHLY ENDORSED PPP PRESSURE TACTICS TO SQUEEZE CABINET POSITIONS OUT OF THE GOI BEFORE THE 1978 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, OST RECENTLY ADVOCATED POSTPONING PPP DEMANDS FOR A LARGER GOVERNMENTAL ROLE UNTIL 1982 IN ORDER TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ARMY. SIMILARLY, THE PPP VICE CHAIRMAN CITED EARLIER APPEARED RESIGNED TO A MINIMAL PPP PRESENCE IN THE NEW CABINET AND CONFIRMED THAT PPP'S ELECTED PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS AT BOTH THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL WOULD TAKE THEIR SEATS. FINALLY THE PPP-BACKED NEWSPAPER PELITA, WHICH THE GOI PLANS TO TAKE TO COURT AT SOME UNSPECIFIED TIME FOR ITS ELECTION REPORTING "LIES," HAS LOWERED ITS VOICE IN RECENT DAYS.

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SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /059 W
----------000875 110136Z /61/10
R 080900Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2362
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JAKARTA 9164

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADD MEDAN AND SURABAYA AS INFO ADDEES

8. OTHER NESPAPERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE SEIZED ON
THE WIDODO SPEECH AS FRESH GRIST FOR THEIR JOURNALISTIIC
MILLS. KOMPAS HAS LEAD THE WAY IN REPORTING EXTENSIVELY
WIDESPREAD PUBLIC REACTION TO THE WIDODO THEME, MOST OF
IT DISAGREEING WITH THE GENERAL'S THESIS THAT "OPPOSITION"
EQUATES WITH SEMINAL SUBVERSION. EVEN LEADERS CLOSELY
ASSOCIATED WITH THE REGIME LIKE GOLKAR'S PARLIAMENTARY
FACTION LEADER SUGIHARTO AND INFORMATION MINISTER MASHURI
HAVE TAKEN EXCEPTION WITH WIDODO (ALTHOUGH BOTH ARE KNOWN
TO HAVE OTHER CURRENT DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE PALACE, AND
MAY BE USING WIDOD AS A SURROGATE TARGET). MEANWHILE
THE LEFT-LEANING DAILY MERDEKA HAS REACHED A NEW LEVEL OF
RABBLE-ROUSING, SIMULTANEOUSLY REFUTING WIDODO WHILE
LAUNCHING JOURNALISTIC MISSLES AT MANY OF THE SACRED
COWS OF SUHARTO REGIME (INCLUDING CHARGING THAT THE
STUDENT "TROOPS" WHICH PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN TOPPLING
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SUKARNO WERE CALLOUSLY MANIPULATED BY OTHER FORCES). ON
TOP OF THIS, THE STUDENTS THEMSEVLES, FAR FROM BEING
COWED BY WIDODO, HAVE ACCELERATED THEIR DISORGANIZED,
LARGELY IMPOTENT BUT HIGHLY VISIBLE ANTI-GOVERNMENT ANTICS.

9. ALL OF THIS, THOUGH, PROBABLY ADDS UP TO LESS THAN
MEETS THE EYE. THE WELL-SPRING OF THE DISCONTENT, THE
STUDENTS, ARE NOT AT THIS POINT A GENUINE THREAT TO THE TENURE
OF THE SUHARTO REGIME. THEIR POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION IS
MUCH LESS THAN IT WAS BEFORE THE 1974 ANTI-TANAKA (MALARI)
RIOTS (ALTHOUGH ONE INFORMED JOURNALIST NOTES WITH FORTHCOMING

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FUKUDA VISIT IN MIND THAT THE PROLIFERATION
OF STUDENT MOVEMENTS SUPERFICIALLY RESEMBLES
THE SITUATION AT THAT TIME). THE SUTDENTS ARE STILL
SMARTING FROM THE POST-MALARI GOI SECURITY CRACKDOWN AND
EMPHASIZE PRIVATELY THEIR DETERMINATION TO STOP SHORT OF
INCITING A NEW GOI REACTION. THEY ARE ALSO SPLINTERED
ALONG POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND SCHOOL LINES. INDEED, IN
A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO ISOLATE AND NEUTRALIZE THE
EXTENSIVE GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO INFILTRATE THEIR RANKS,
THEY SEEM TO HAVE BROKEN DOWN INTO SMALLER, ATOMISTIC
GROUPS, OPERATING WITH LITTLE REFERENCE TO EACH OTHER
ALTHOUGH RESPONDING TO THE SAME POLITICAL PHENOMENA (E.G.,
ALI SADIKIN). THE USUALLY AGRESSIVE STUDENT COUNCILS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA AND THE BANDUNG TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE HAVE REMAINED STRIKINGLY SILENT.

10. ASIDE FROM SECTIONS OF THE PRESS, THE STUDENTS WOULD
APPEAR TO HAVE FEW BACKERS OR INSTIGATORS. THERE ARE NO
INDICATIONS THAT THEY HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM MILITARY
CIRCLES. ALI SADIKIN HAS, HIMSELF, TOLD THEM (CORRECTLY)
THAT HE HAS INADEQUATE POLITICAL BACKING (REF. A) AND
THE MOSLEM LEADERSHIP, AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, IS DISICLINED
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TO TAKE RISKS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE AGENTS ARE PROVOKING THE STUDENTS AS
THEY DID BEFORE THE MALARI RIOTS.

11. THE GOVERNMENT HAS THUS FAR ACTED IN A NON-CONFRONTA-
TIONAL MANNER. TWO STUDENTS WERE BRIEFLY
DETAINED BY POLICE EARLY IN THE WEEK FOR PARTICIPATION IN
AN UNAUTHORIZED PRO-SADIKIN RALLY, BUT SECURITY FORCES HAVE
SUBSEQUENTLY DEMONSTRATED MARKED RESTRAINT, REPORTEDLY
ON ORDERS OF HIGHER AUTHORITY.

12. ALTHOUGH PROBABLY HOPING THAT ALI SADIKIN'S STAR
WILL FADE WHEN HE LEAVES PUBLIC OFFICE, THE GOVERNMENT IS
APPARENTLY PREPARING FOR OTHER CONTINGENCIES. WE HAVE
RELIABLE REPORTS THAT MILITARY AUTHORITIES ARE EXAMINING
CITY RECORDS FOR EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION AND FOR INDICA-
TIONS THAT SADIKIN COOPERATED WITH THE SOVIETS TO UNDER-
MINE THE SUHARTO ADMINISTRATION. WHETHER SUCH CHARGES
WOULD BE HELD IN RESERVE TO KEEP SADIKIN IN LINE,
LEAKED TO FRIENDLY MEDIA SOURCES TO DISCREDIT THE
GOVERNOR OR USED AS PRETEXT FOR SADIKIN'S DETENTION (AS
SOME JOURNALISTS FEAR) IS NOT CLEAR. ANY OF THESE ACTIONS
BUT PARTICULARLY THE LATTER WOULD ADD A NEW AND INCENDIARY
ELEMENT TO THE POLITICAL EQUATION, MARKEDLY INCREASING THE
POSSIBILITY OF A NEW CYCLE OF ACCELERATING DISSENT AND
GOVERNMENT REPRESSION.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID, (SADIKIN, ALI)
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